



HAMILTON-WENHAM

Regional School District

5 School Street, Wenham MA 01984

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District School Committee Meeting Minutes

School Committee Meeting ([agenda](#))

Buker Elementary School Multipurpose Room

In-Person Meeting

[Zoomlink](#) is for Public Comment Only

Meeting ID: 99162518212

Thursday, January 22, 2026

6:30 p.m. - 9:25 p.m.

Present:

Dana Allara

Meghan Benson

Julia Campbell

Jen Carr

Amy Kunberger

Kristin Noon

Also Present:

Eric Tracy, HWRSD Superintendent

Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent

1. Call to Order

At 6:31 p.m. Dana Allara called the meeting to order. She reminded the community that the meeting is being recorded and live-streamed via HWCAM.

2. Public Hearing - School Choice for 2026-2027

Superintendent Tracy discussed the state's school choice program and the requirement that each year school committees hold a public hearing regarding school choice participation. He reviewed the number of school choice students attending Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

There was no public comment.

3. Public Hearing #1 - HWRSD FY27 Budget

Assistant Superintendent Leone gave an overview of the proposed FY27 budget.

There was no public comment.

Dana Allara reminded the community that there will be a second public hearing on the budget on February 12.

4. Review of School Committee Protocol [Exhibit](#)

Meghan Benson read School Committee Protocol number 9.

5. Review of School Committee Mission Statement [Exhibit](#)

Kristin Noon read the following from the Mission Statement: The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District School Committee's mission is to ensure our schools create graduates with a passion for lifelong learning together with the critical skills needed to maximize their potential. The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee will lead and inspire a district that inspires all students to realize their fullest potential and feel a powerful sense of individual and collective belonging.

6. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Tracy discussed the recent event at the State House where the Cutler School received an award for MCAS achievements. He discussed an event regarding school funding scheduled for February 6 hosted by Representative Bowen.

7. Consent Agenda

a. Warrants [Exhibit](#)

- Voucher No. 16
- Voucher No. 1084
- Voucher No. 1085
- Voucher No. 1086
- Voucher No. 4194
- Voucher No. 4195

b. Minutes

- January 8, 2026 [Exhibit](#)

c. Donations

- FOTA Grant - Charlotte's Web Stage Show; \$780 [Exhibit](#)

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee accept the consent agenda as presented.

Motion by: Julia Campbell

Seconded by: Jen Carr

MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Campbell, Carr, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

Dana Allara stated that because the meeting was ahead of schedule she would like to, without objection, take Committee reports out of order. There was no objection.

8. Committee Report

- a. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee - met last Monday to discuss the budget
- b. Policy Subcommittee - next meeting January 26
- c. Negotiations - met this afternoon and currently negotiating with the ESP union
- d. Secretary Report - no update
- e. In Our Inboxes - a few emails were received regarding the budget

Dana Allara stated that without objection she would move New Business items f and g to item a and b and take those items out of order. There was no objection.

9. New Business

- a. Appoint Negotiations Subcommittee Member

Dana Allara discussed the need to appoint a negotiations subcommittee member.

I nominate Julia Campbell to serve on the negotiations subcommittee.

Motion by: Amy Kunberger

Seconded by: Jen Carr

MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Campbell, Carr, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

- b. Vote School Committee Attorney

Dana Allara stated that this item was added after the 48 hour requirement because it was an unanticipated item. She stated that Attorney Marc Terry called to notify the district that he is switching firms and the negotiations subcommittee is recommending the district keep Attorney Terry to finalize negotiations with the ESP union.

I move that we designate Eric Tracy to engage the law firm of Stoneman, Chandler & Miller, LLP for representation for collection bargaining with the ESP Union.

Motion by: Kristin Noon

Seconded by: Julia Campbell

MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Campbell, Carr, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

10. Citizen's Comments [Exhibit](#)

Bridget O'Donnell 105 Main Street, Wenham and a HWRSD teacher thanked the Committee for their transparency during the budget season.

Katie O'Brien 114 Forest Street and a HWRSD teacher thanked the Committee for their work on the budget.

Linda Masteriani, HWEA union president thanked the committee for their work during this difficult budget season and stated that she looks forward to continuing to work together with the committee.

There was no additional citizen comment.

9. New Business (continued)

- c. Water Testing Results [Exhibit](#)

Curtis Wightman discussed the water testing results.

d. HVAC Unit Grant HS Roof [Exhibit](#)

Curtis Wightman discussed the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Green Communities Division grant award of \$144,518.00 for the heat pump and heat recovery equipment. Superintendent Tracy requested the Committee vote to accept the grant.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee accept the grant from DOER Green Communities Division as presented.

Motion by: Julia Campbell

Seconded by: Meghan Benson

MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Campbell, Carr, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

e. Building & Equipment Use Fees [Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy discussed the proposed fee increases.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee accept the building and equipment user fees as presented with annual review.

Motion by: Julia Campbell

Seconded by: Amy Kunberger

MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Campbell, Carr, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

f. Preschool Tuition Increase [Exhibit](#)

Assistant Superintendent Leone reviewed the proposed preschool tuition increase.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee set the School Year 2026-2027 Preschool Tuition rates to \$7,770 for 5-Days/Week, \$4,660 for 3-Days/Week, and \$3,110 for 2- Days/Week.

Motion by: Julia Campbell

Seconded by: Amy Kunberger

In response to a question, Assistant Superintendent Leone stated that HWRSD tuition rates are comparable to other communities but on the lower end.

MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Campbell, Carr, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

g. Vote School Choice

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee accept School Choice for 2026-2027.

Motion by: Julia Campbell

Seconded by: Jen Carr

MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Campbell, Carr, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)

11. Finance & Operations

- a. FY27 Budget Update [Exhibit](#)

Assistant Superintendent Leone provided an update on the FY27 budget and reviewed the two options presented for additional reductions.

The Committee held a lengthy discussion on the budget and the two proposed options for additional reductions. The Committee provided direction to the administration for the next round of reductions including cutting between \$200,000 and \$250,000 using a blend of the technology items listed in the right column of option two and the gym curtain divider with further direction that should funds become available during the year that the curtain divider should be a priority.

12. Chair's Report

The next community meeting is scheduled for Thursday at the high school library.

13. Topics for Future Meetings

Executive session to update on status of negotiations and to approve executive session minutes, vote on town meeting warrant articles.

14. Adjourn

I move to adjourn at 9:25 p.m.

Motion by: Julia Campbell

Seconded by: Amy Kunberger

MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Benson, Campbell, Carr, Kunberger and Noon voted yes)